



STATE OF NEVADA

Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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NEWS RELEASE

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Water Quality Award Presented to Roland Westergard

CARSON CITY — Longtime water resource advocate Roland Westergard was recognized today by the State of Nevada for his lifetime of dedication to the protection of the state's precious water resources.

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) presented its 2008 Wendell McCurry Excellence in Water Quality Award to Westergard at a ceremony at the offices of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in Carson City, with members of his family and many friends and colleagues in attendance. The award recognizes his nearly 50 years of work in water quality protection and water conservation education, especially relating to Lake Tahoe.

Westergard is past director of DCNR and played a key role in the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA), which was signed last month after 20 years of negotiation. A major focus of TROA is water quality.

As a member of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA) governing board from 1983 to 1998, including being chair for two years, Westergard was instrumental in the development of several milestone water policies, including the bi-state compact with California and the development of water quality standards that establish beneficial uses of the lake and criteria to protect those uses.



(Photo – Roland Westergard and Allen Biaggi, Director, Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources)

The compact was approved Congress and signed into law in 1990. Widely respected for his integrity and breadth of experience, Westergard is also credited with fighting for the environmental protection of Lake Tahoe and its watershed, especially during the 1980s and '90s, in the face of heavy political pressure from pro-development interests.

“No one is more committed, more passionate, or more persuasive than Roland when it comes to advocating for protection of Nevada’s water resources,” said Allen Biaggi, DCNR’s director, in presenting the award. “His knowledge and experience in water resource management are virtually unmatched. When he talks about water, everyone listens.”

Having grown up on a small ranch in Lovelock, Westergard learned at a very young age to appreciate the value of water and its uses in an arid state like Nevada. After a stint in the Army, he went to work as an engineer for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 1958. In 1960, he joined the Nevada Division of Water Resources as an engineer; became Assistant State Engineer in 1965; served as State Engineer from 1967-79, and as DCNR Director from 1979-90. In retirement, he has served as a water resource consultant based in Carson City.

As a volunteer, Westergard has served on the Board of Directors for the League to Save Lake Tahoe; on the Advisory Board of the Tahoe-Baikal Institute; and on the Colorado River Commission of Nevada.

The Wendell McCurry Award is presented annually in honor of long-time NDEP employee, Wendell McCurry, to commemorate his dedication to protecting water quality throughout Nevada.